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Passive Obedience,

OR, THE

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Christian Doctrine

Of Not Resisting the

S U P R E M E P O W E R,

Proved and Vindicated upon the

P R I N C I P L E S

O F T H E

L A W o f N A T U R E.

In a **DISCOURSE** Deliver'd
at the *College-Chapel.*

By **GEORGE BERKELEY**, M. A. Fellow
of *Trinity-College, Dublin.*

*Nec vero aut per Senatum aut per Populum solvi hac
lege possumus. Cicero Fragment. de Repub.*

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To the Reader.

THAT an Absolute Passive Obedience ought not to be paid any Civil Power : But that Submission to Government shou'd be Measured and Limited by the Public Good of the Society ; and that therefore Subjects may Lawfully Resist the Supreme Authority, in those Cases where the Public Good shall plainly seem to require it : Nay, that it is their Duty to do so, inasmuch as they are all under an indispensable Obligation to promote the Common Interest: These and the like Notions, which I cannot help thinking Pernicious to Mankind and Repugnant to Right Reason, having of late Years been Industriously Cultivated, and set in the most Advantageous Lights by Men of Parts and Learning, it seemed necessary to Arm the Youth of our University against them, and take care they go into the World well Principled ; I do not mean Obstinately Prejudic'd in favour of
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To the Reader.

a Party, but from an early Acquaintance with their Duty, and the clear Rational Grounds of it, Determin'd to such Practices as may speak them Good Christians and Loyal Subjects.

In this View, I made three Discourses not many Months since in the College-Chapel, which some who heard them thought it might be of Use to make more Public: And indeed, the false Accounts that are gone abroad concerning them, have made it necessary. Accordingly I now send them into the World under the Form of one entire Discourse.

To Conclude; As in Writing these Thoughts it was my Endeavour to Preserve that Cool and Impartial Temper which becomes every sincere Enquirer after Truth, so I heartily wish they may be Read with the same Disposition.

Romans Ch. 13. Ver. 2.

Whosoever Resisteth the Power, Resisteth the Ordinance of God.

I. **I**T is not my Design to enquire into the particular Nature of the Government and Constitution of these Kingdoms; much less to pretend to determine concerning the Merits of the different Parties now reigning in the State. Those Topicks I profess to lie out of my Sphere, and they will probably be thought by most Men, improper to be Treated of in an Audience almost wholly made up of young Persons, set apart from the business and noise of the World, for their more convenient instruction in Learning and Piety. But surely it is in no respect unsuitable to the circumstances of this place to inculcate and explain every branch of the Law of Nature; or those Virtues and Duties which are equally binding in every Kingdom or Society of Men under Heaven; and of this kind I take to be that Christian Duty of not Resisting the Supreme Power implied in my Text. *Whosoever Resisteth the Power, Resisteth the Ordinance of God.* In Treating on which Words I shall observe the following Method.

II. First, I shall endeavour to prove, That there is an absolute unlimited Non-Resistance or Passive Obedience

Obedience due to the Supreme Civil Power, where ever placed in any Nation. Secondly, I shall enquire into the Grounds and Reasons of the contrary Opinion. Thirdly, I shall consider the Objections drawn from the pretended consequences of Non-Resistance to the Supreme Power. In handling these Points, I intend not to build on the Authority of Holy Scripture, but altogether on the Principles of Reason common to all mankind; and that, because there are some very rational and learned Men, who being verily perswaded, an absolute passive Subjection to any earthly Power, is repugnant to right Reason, can never bring themselves to admit such an Interpretation of Holy Scripture (however natural and obvious from the words) as shall make that a part of Christian Religion, which seems to them in it self manifestly absurd, and destructive of the Original inherent Rights of humane Nature.

III. I do not mean to Treat of that submission, which Men are either in Duty or Prudence obliged to pay inferior or executive Powers; neither shall I consider where, or in what Persons the Supreme or Legislative Power is lodged in this or that Government. Only thus much I shall take for granted, That there is in every Civil Community, some where or other, placed a Supreme Power of making Laws, and enforcing the Observation of them. The fulfilling of those Laws, either by a punctual performance of what is enjoined in them, or, if that be inconsistent with Reason or Conscience, by a patient Submission to whatever Penalties the Supreme Power hath annexed to the Neglect or Transgression of them, is termed *Loyalty*; as on the other hand, the making Use of Force and open Violence, either to withstand the execution

cution of the Laws, or ward off the Penalties appointed by the Supreme Power, is properly Named *Rebellion*. Now to make it evident, that every degree of Rebellion is Criminal in the Subject; I shall in the first place endeavour to prove that Loyalty is a natural or moral Duty; and Disloyalty or Rebellion in the most strict and proper Sense, a Vice or Breach of the Law of Nature. And Secondly, I propose to shew that the Prohibitions of Vice, or Negative Precepts of the Law of Nature, as, Thou shalt not commit Adultery, Thou shalt not Forswear thy self, Thou shalt not Resist the Supreme Power, and the like, ought to be taken in a most absolute, necessary, and immutable Sense: Insomuch, that the attainment of the greatest Good, or deliverance from the greatest Evil, that can befall any Man or number of Men in this Life, may not justify the least Violation of them. First then I am to shew that Loyalty is a Moral Duty, and Disloyalty or Rebellion in the most strict and proper Sense a Vice, or breach of the Law of Nature.

IV. Tho' it be a Point agreed amongst all Wise Men, that there are certain Moral Rules or Laws of Nature, which carry with them an eternal and indispensable Obligation; yet concerning the proper Methods for discovering those Laws, and distinguishing them from others dependent on the Humour and Discretion of Men, there are various Opinions; some direct us to look for them in the Divine Ideas, others in the natural Inscriptions on the Mind; some derive them from the Authority of Learned Men, and the Universal Agreement and Consent of Nations. Lastly, others hold that they are only to be discovered by the deductions of Reason. The three first Methods must be acknowledged to labour under great Difficulties, and the last

last has not, that I know, been any where distinctly explained, or treated of so fully as the importance of the Subject doth deserve. I hope therefore it will be Pardon'd, if in a Discourse of Passive Obedience, in order to lay the Foundation of that Duty the deeper, we make some Enquiry into the Origine, Nature, and Obligation of Moral Duties in general, and the *Criteria* whereby they are to be known.

V. Self-Love being a Principle of all others the most Universal, and the most deeply engraven in our Hearts, it is natural for us to regard things, as they are fitted to augment or impair our own Happiness; and accordingly we denominate them *Good* or *Evil*. Our Judgment is ever employ'd in distinguishing between these two, and it is the whole business of our Lives, to endeavour, by a proper application of our Faculties, to procure the one and avoid the other. At our first coming into the World, we are entirely guided by the Impressions of Sense, sensible Pleasure being the infallible Characteristic of present Good, as Pain is of Evil. But by degrees, as we grow up in our acquaintance with the Nature of Things, experience informs us that present Good is afterwards oft attended with a greater Evil; and on the other side, that present Evil is not less frequently the occasion of procuring to us a greater future Good. Besides, as the Nobler Faculties of the human Soul begin to display themselves, they discover to us Goods far more excellent than those which affect the Senses. Hence an alteration is wrought in our Judgments, we no longer comply with the first solicitations of Sense, but stay to consider the remote consequences of an Action, what Good may be hoped, or what Evil feared from it, according to the wonted Course of things.

things. This obliges us frequently to overlook present momentary Enjoyments, when they come in competition with greater and more lasting Goods, tho' too far off, or of too refin'd a Nature to affect our Senses.

VI. But as the whole Earth, and the entire duration of those perishing Things contained in it, is altogether inconsiderable, or in the Prophet's expressive Stile, *less than nothing* in respect of Eternity, who sees not that every reasonable Man ought so to frame his Actions, as that they may most effectually contribute to promote his Eternal Interest? And since it is a Truth evident by the Light of Nature, that there is a Sovereign Omniscient Spirit, who alone can make us for ever Happy, or for ever Miserable; it plainly follows, that a Conformity to his Will, and not any Prospect of Temporal Advantage, is the sole Rule whereby every Man who acts up to the Principles of Reason, must Govern and Square his Actions. The same Conclusion doth likewise evidently Result from the Relation which God bears to his Creatures. God alone is Maker and Preserver of all Things. He is therefore with the most undoubted Right the great Legislator of the World; and Mankind are by all the Ties of Duty, no less than Interest, bound to Obey his Laws.

VII. Hence we should above all things endeavour to trace out the Divine Will, or the general design of Providence with regard to Mankind, and the Methods most directly tending to the accomplishment of that design, and this seems the genuine and proper way for discovering the Laws of Nature. For Laws being Rules directive of our Actions to the end intended by the Legislator, in

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order to attain the Knowledge of God's Laws, we ought first to enquire what that end is, which he designs should be carried on by human Actions. Now, as God is a Being of Infinite Goodness, it is plain the end he proposes is *Good*. But God enjoying in himself all possible Perfection, it follows that it is not his own Good, but that of his Creatures. Again, the Moral Actions of Men are entirely terminated within themselves, so as to have no influence on the other orders of Intelligences or reasonable Creatures: The end therefore to be procured by them, can be no other than the good of Men. But as nothing in a natural State can entitle one Man more than another to the favour of God, except only Moral Goodness, which consisting in a Conformity to the Laws of God, doth presuppose the being of such Laws, and Law ever supposing an end, to which it guides our Actions, it follows that Antecedent to the end proposed by God, no distinction can be conceived between Men; that end therefore it self or general design of Providence is not determined or limited by any Respect of Persons: It is not therefore the private Good of this or that Man, Nation or Age, but the general well-being of all Men, of all Nations, of all Ages of the World, which God designs should be procured by the concurring Actions of each individual. Having thus discover'd the great end, to which all Moral Obligations are Subordinate; it remains, that we enquire what Methods are necessary for the obtaining that End.

VIII. The well-being of Mankind must necessarily be carried on one of these two ways: Either first, without the injunction of any certain universal Rules of Morality, only by obliging every one

one upon each particular Occasion, to consult the publick Good, and always to do that, which to him shall seem in the present time and circumstances, most to conduce to it. Or Secondly, by enjoining the Observation of some determinate, establish'd Laws, which, if Universally practis'd, have from the Nature of things an Essential fitness to procure the well-being of Mankind; tho' in their particular Application, they are sometimes through untoward accidents, and the perverse irregularity of human Wills, the occasions of great Sufferings, and Misfortunes, it may be, to very many good Men. Against the former of these Methods there lie several strong Objections. For brevity I shall mention only two.

IX. First, it will thence follow, that the Best Men for want of Judgment, and the Wisest for want of knowing all the hidden circumstances and consequences of an Action, may very often be at a loss how to behave themselves; which they would not be, in case they judg'd of each Action, by comparing it with some particular Precept, rather than by examining the Good or Evil which in that single instance it tends to procure: It being far more easy to Judge with certainty, whether such or such an Action be a Transgression of this or that Precept, than whether it will be attended with more good or ill Consequences. In short, to calculate the events of each particular Action is impossible, and tho' it were not, would yet take up too much time to be of Use in the affairs of Life. Secondly, if that Method be observ'd, it will follow that we can have no sure Standard, to which comparing the Actions of another, we may pronounce them good or bad, Virtues or Vices. For since the measure and

rule of every good Man's Actions is supposed to be nothing else, but his own private disinterested Opinion, of what makes most for the publick Good at that juncture : And since this Opinion must unavoidably in different Men, from their particular Views and Circumstances, be very different : It is impossible to know, whether any one instance of Parricide or Perjury, for example, be Criminal. The Man may have had his Reasons for it, and that which in me would have been a heinous Sin, may be in him a Duty. Every Man's particular Rule is buried in his own Breast, invisible to all but himself, who therefore can only tell whether he Observes it or no. And since that Rule is fitted to particular Occasions, it must ever change as they do : Hence it is not only various in different Men, but in one and the same Man at different times. *

X. From all which it follows, there can be no Harmony or Agreement between the Actions of good Men : No apparent Steadiness or Consistency of one Man with himself, no adhering to Principles : The best Actions may be Condemn'd, and the most Villanous meet with Applause. In a Word, there ensues the most horrible confusion of Vice and Virtue, Sin and Duty, that can possibly be imagined. It follows therefore that the great end, to which God requires the concurrence of human Actions, must of necessity be carried on by the second Method proposed, namely, the observation of certain, universal, determinate Rules or Moral Precepts, which, in their own Nature, have a necessary tendency to promote the Well-being of the Sum of Mankind, taking in all Nations and Ages, from the beginning to the end of the World.

XI. Hence

XI. Hence upon an equal comprehensive Survey of the general Nature, the Passions, Interests, and mutual Respects of Mankind; whatsoever practical Proposition doth to right Reason evidently appear to have a necessary connexion with the universal Well-being included in it, is to be look'd upon as enjoined by the Will of God. For he that willeth the end, doth will the necessary means conducive to that end; but it hath been shewn, that God willeth the Universal Well-being of Mankind should be promoted by the concurrence of each particular Person; therefore every such practical Proposition, necessarily tending thereto, is to be esteemed a Decree of God, and is consequently a Law to Man.

XII. These Propositions are called *Laws of Nature*, because they are universal, and do not derive their Obligation from any Civil Sanction, but immediately from the Author of Nature himself. They are said to be *stamped on the Mind*, to be *engraven on the Tables of the Heart*, because they are well known to Mankind, and suggested and inculcated by Conscience. Lastly, they are termed *Eternal Rules of Reason*, because they necessarily result from the Nature of Things, and may be demonstrated by the infallible deductions of Reason.

XIII. And notwithstanding that these Rules are too often, either by the unhappy concurrence of events, or more especially by the wickedness of perverse Men, who will not Conform to them, made accidental causes of Misery to those good Men, who do; yet this doth not vacate their Obligation, they are ever to be esteemed the fixed unal-

unalterable Standards of Moral Good and Evil ; no private Interest , no Love of Friends, no Regard to the publick Good , should make us depart from them. Hence , when any doubt arises concerning the Morality of an Action, 'tis plain, this cannot be determined by computing the publick Good , which in that particular Case it is attended with, but only by comparing it with the Eternal Law of Reason. He who squares his actions by this Rule, can never do amiss, tho' thereby he should bring himself to Poverty, Death , or Disgrace : No, not tho' he should involve his Family, his Friends, his Country in all those Evils, which are accounted the Greatest, and most insupportable to human Nature. Tendernefs and Benevolence of Temper are often motives to the best and greatest Actions ; but we must not make them the sole Rule of our Actions ; they are Passions rooted in our nature , and like all other Passions must be restrain'd and kept under, otherwise they may possibly betray us into as great Enormities, as any other unbridled Lust. Nay, they are more dangerous than other Passions, insomuch as they are more plausible, and apt to dazzle, and corrupt the Mind , with the appearance of Goodness and Generosity.

XIV. For the Illustration of what has been said, it will not be amiss , if from the Moral we turn our Eyes on the Natural World. *Homo ortus est* (says *Balbus* in *Cicero* *) *ad Mundum contemplandum , & imitandum* : And surely, it is not possible for free intellectual Agents to propose a nobler Pattern for their imitation than Nature, which

* *De Natura Deorum*, Lib. 2.

is nothing else but a series of free Actions produced by the best and wisest Agent. But it is evident that those Actions are not adapted to particular Views, but all conformed to certain general Rules, which being collected from Observation, are by Philosophers termed Laws of Nature. And these indeed are excellently suited to promote the general well-being of the Creation : But what from casual combinations of events, and what from the voluntary motions of Animals, it often falls out, that the natural good not only of private Men, but of entire Cities and Nations, wou'd be better promoted by a particular Suspension, or Contradiction, than an exact Observation of those Laws. Yet for all that, Nature still takes its course ; nay, it is plain that Plagues, Famines, Inundations, Earthquakes, with an infinite variety of Pains and Sorrows ; in a word all kinds of Calamities publick and private do arise from a uniform steddy observation of those general Laws, which are once establish'd by the Author of Nature, and which he will not change or deviate from upon any of those Accounts, how wise or benevolent soever it may be thought by foolish Men to do so. As for the Miracles Recorded in Scripture, they were always wrought for Confirmation of some Doctrine or Mission from God, and not for the sake of the particular natural goods, as Health or Life, which some Men might have reaped from them. From all which it seems sufficiently plain, that we cannot be at a loss, which way to determine, in case we think God's own Methods the properest to obtain his ends, and that it is our Duty to Copy after them, so far as the frailty of our Nature will permit.

XV. Thus

XV. Thus far in general, of the nature and necessity of moral Rules, and the *Criterion* or Mark whereby they may be known. As for the particulars, from the foregoing Discourse, the principal of them may without much difficulty be deduced. It hath been shewn that the Law of Nature is a System of such Rules or Precepts, as that if they be all of them, at all times, in all places, and by all Men observed, they will necessarily promote the well-being of Mankind, so far as it is attainable by human Actions. Now, let any one who hath the use of Reason, take but an impartial Survey of the general frame and circumstances of human Nature, and it will appear plainly to him, that the constant observation of Truth, for instance, of Justice, and Chastity, hath a necessary connexion with their universal well-being, that therefore they are to be esteemed Virtues or Duties, and that, *Thou shalt not Forswear thy self, Thou shalt not Commit Adultery, Thou shalt not Steal*, are so many unalterable Moral Rules, which to violate in the least degree is Vice or Sin. I say, the agreement of these particular practical Propositions, with the Definition, or *Criterion* premised, doth so clearly result from the nature of Things, that it were a needless digression, in this place to enlarge upon it. And from the same Principle, by the very same Reasoning, it follows that Loyalty is a moral Virtue, and, *Thou shalt not Resist the Supreme Power*, a Rule or Law of Nature, the least breach whereof hath the inherent stain of Moral Turpitude.

XVI. The Miseries inseparable from a State of Anarchy are easily imagined. So insufficient is the Wit or Strength of any single Man, either to avert the Evils, or procure the Blessings of Life, and so
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apt are the Wills of different Persons to contradict and thwart each other, that it is absolutely necessary, several independent Powers be combin'd together, under the Direction (if I may so speak) of one and the same Will, I mean the Law of the Society. Without this there is no Politeness, no Order, no Peace among Men, but the World is one great heap of Misery and Confusion; the Strong as well as the Weak, the Wise as well as the Foolish, standing on all sides expos'd to all those Calamities, which Man can be liable to in a State where he has no other Security, than the not being possess'd of any thing which may raise Envy or Desire in another. A State! by so much more ineligible than that of Brutes, as a reasonable Creature hath a greater reflexion and foresight of Miseries than they. From all which it plainly follows, that Loyalty or Submission to the Supreme Civil Authority, hath, if universally practis'd in conjunction with all other Virtues, a necessary connexion with the well-being of the whole Sum of Mankind; and by consequence, if the *Criterion* we have laid down, be True, it is, strictly speaking, a Moral Duty, or branch of Natural Religion. And therefore, the least degree of Rebellion is with the utmost strictness and propriety, a *Sin*: Not only in Christians, but also in those who have the Light of Reason alone for their Guide. Nay, upon a thorough and impartial View, this Submission will, I think, appear one of the very first and fundamental Laws of Nature, inasmuch as it is Civil Government which ordains and marks out the various Relations between Men, and regulates Property, thereby giving Scope and laying a foundation for the exercise of all other Duties. And in Truth, whoever considers the Condition of Man, will scarce conceive it possible that

the practice of any one Moral Virtue shou'd Obtain, in the naked, forlorn State of Nature.

XVII. But since it must be confess'd, that in all Cases our Actions come not within the Direction of certain fixed Moral Rules, it may possibly be still questioned, whether Obedience to the Supreme Power be not one of those exempted Cases, and consequently to be regulated by the Prudence and Discretion of every single Person, rather than adjusted to the Rule of absolute Non-Resistance. I shall therefore endeavour to make it yet more plain, that, *Thou shalt not Resist the Supreme Power*, is an undoubted Precept of Morality; as will appear from the following Considerations. First then, Submission to Government is a Point *important* enough to be established by a Moral Rule. Things of insignificant and trifling Concern are, for that very Reason, exempted from the Rules of Morality. But Government, on which so much depend the Peace, Order, and Well-being of Mankind, cannot surely be thought of too small Importance to be Secur'd and Guarded by a Moral Rule. Government, I say, which is it self the principal Source under Heaven, of those particular Advantages, for the procurement and conservation whereof, several unquestionable Moral Rules were prescribed to Men.

XVIII. Secondly, Obedience to Government is a Case *Universal* enough to fall under the Direction of a Law of Nature. Numberless Rules there may be for regulating Affairs of great Concernment, at certain Junctures, and to some particular Persons or Societies, which notwithstanding are not to be esteemed Moral or Natural Laws, but may be either totally abrogated or dispensed with; because

because the private Ends they were intended to promote, respect only some particular Persons, as engaged in Relations not founded in the general Nature of Man, who on various Occasions, and in different Postures of Things, may prosecute their own Designs by different Measures, as in Humane Prudence shall seem convenient. But what relation is there more extensive and universal than that of Subject and Law? This is confin'd to no particular Age or Climate, but universally obtains at all Times, and in all Places, wherever Men live in a state exalted above that of Brutes. It is therefore evident, that the Rule forbidding Resistance to the Law or Supreme Power, is not upon pretence of any defect in point of *Universality*, to be excluded from the Number of the Laws of Nature.

XIX. Thirdly, There is another Consideration, which confirms the Necessity of admitting this Rule for a Moral or Natural Law; namely, because the Case it regards is of too *Nice* and *Difficult* a Nature to be left to the Judgment and Determination of each private Person. Some Cases there are so plain and obvious to judge of, that they may safely be trusted to the Prudence of every reasonable Man; but in all Instances, to determine, whether a Civil Law is fitted to promote the Publick Interest; or whether Submission or Resistance will prove most advantageous in the Consequence; or when it is, that the general Good of a Nation may require an Alteration of Government, either in its Form, or in the Hands which Administer it: these are Points too arduous and intricate, and which require too great a degree of Parts, Leisure, and liberal Education, as well as Disinterestedness and thorough Knowledge in the particular State of a Kingdom, for every Subject to take upon him the Determination

nation of them. From which it follows, that upon this account also, Non-Resistance, which, in the main, no body can deny to be a most profitable and wholesome Duty, ought not to be limited by the Judgment of private Persons to particular Occasions, but esteemed a most Sacred Law of Nature.

XX. The foregoing Arguments do, I think, make it manifest, that the Precept against Rebellion is on a Level with other Moral Rules. Which will yet farther appear from this fourth and last Consideration. It cannot be denied, that Right Reason doth require some common stated Rule or Measure, whereby Subjects ought to shape their Submission to the Supreme Power. Since any clashing or disagreement in this Point must unavoidably tend to weaken, and dissolve the Society. And it is unavoidable, that there shou'd be great clashing, where it is left to the breast of each Individual to suit his Fancy with a different measure of Obedience. But this common stated Measure must be either the general Precept forbidding Resistance, or else the publick Good of the whole Nation: Which last, tho' it is allowed to be in it self something certain and determinate; yet, forasmuch as Men can regulate their Conduct only by what appears to them, whether in Truth it be what it appears or no; and since the Prospects Men form to themselves of a Country's publick Good, are commonly as various as its Landshapes, which meet the Eye in several Situations: It clearly follows, that to make the publick Good the Rule of Obedience, is in effect, not to establish any determinate, agreed, common Measure of Loyalty, but to leave every Subject to the Guidance of his own particular mutable Fancy.

XXI. From

XXI. From all which Arguments and Considerations it is a most evident Conclusion, That the Law prohibiting Rebellion is in strict Truth a Law of Nature, Universal Reason, and Morality. But to this, it will perhaps be objected by some, that whatever may be concluded with regard to Resistance, from the tedious Deductions of Reason, yet there is I know not what turpitude and deformity in some Actions, which at first Blush, shews them to be vicious; but they, not finding themselves struck with such a sensible and immediate Horror at the thought of Rebellion, cannot think it on a level with other Crimes against Nature. To which I answer, that it is True, there are certain natural Antipathies implanted in the Soul, which are ever the most lasting and insurmountable; but as Custom is a second Nature, whatever Aversions are from our early Childhood continually infused into the Mind, give it so deep a stain as is scarce to be distinguished from natural Complexion. And as it doth hence follow, that to make all the inward horrors of Soul, pass for infallible marks of Sin, were the way to establish Error and Superstition in the World: So, on the other hand, to suppose all Actions lawful, which are unattended with those starts of Nature, wou'd prove of the last dangerous consequence to Virtue and Morality. For these pertaining to us as Men, we must not be directed in respect of them, by any emotions in our Blood and Spirits, but by the dictates of sober and impartial Reason. And if there be any, who find they have a less Abhorrence of Rebellion than of other Villanies, all that can be inferred from it, is, that this part of their Duty was not so much reflected on, or so early and frequently inculcated into their Hearts, as it ought to

to have been. Since without question there are other Men who have as thorough an Aversion for that, as for any other Crime *.

XXII. Again, it will probably be objected, that Submission to Government differs from moral Duties, in that it is founded in a Contract, which upon the Violation of its Conditions doth of course become void, and in such Case Rebellion is lawful; it hath not therefore the Nature of a Sin or Crime, which is in it self absolutely unlawful, and must be committed on no Pretext whatsoever. Now, passing over all Enquiry and Dispute concerning the first obscure Rise of Government, I observe its being founded on a Contract, may be understood in a twofold Sense, either, first, that several independent Persons finding the unsufferable Inconvenience of a State of Anarchy, where every one was governed by his own Will, consented and agreed together to pay an absolute Submission, to the Decrees of some certain Legislative; which, tho sometimes they may bear hard on the Subject, yet, must surely prove easier to be governed by, than the violent Humours, and unsteady opposite Wills of a multitude of Savages. And in case we admit such a Compact to have been the original Foundation of Civil Government; it must even on that Supposition be held Sacred and Inviolable.

* *Il disoit ordinairement qu'il avoit un aussi grand éloignement pour ce peché la que pour assassiner le monde, ou pour voler sur les grands chemins, & qu'enfin il ny avoit rien qui fut plus contraire à son naturel.* He (Mr. Pascal) used to say he had as great an Abhorrence of Rebellion as of Murder, or Robbing on the Way, and that there was nothing more Shocking to his Nature. *Vie de Mr. Pascal, pag. 44*

XXIII. Or Secondly, it is meant that Subjects have contracted with their respective Sovereigns or Legislators, to pay, not an absolute, but conditional and limited Submission to their Laws, that is, upon Condition, and so far forth, as the Observation of them shall contribute to the publick Good : Reserving still to themselves a Right of Superintending the Laws, and Judging whether they are fitted to promote the publick Good or no. And (in case they or any of them think it needful) of Resisting the higher Powers, and changing the whole Frame of Government by Force ; which is a Right that all Mankind, whether single Persons or Societies, have over those that are deputed by them. But in this Sense a Contract cannot be admitted for the Ground and Measure of civil Obedience, except one of these two Things be clearly shewn : Either, First, That such a Contract is an expresse known Part of the Fundamental Constitution of a Nation, equally allowed and unquestioned by all as the common Law of the Land. Or, Secondly, If it be not expresse, that it is at least necessarily implied in the very Nature or Notion of Civil Polity, which supposes it is a thing manifestly absurd, that a Number of Men shou'd be oblig'd to live under an unlimited Subjection to Civil Law, rather than continue wild and independent of each other. But to me it seems most evident, that neither of those Points will ever be proved.

XXIV. And till they are proved beyond all Contradiction, the Doctrine built upon them, ought to be rejected with Detestation. Since to represent the Higher Powers as Deputies of the People, manifestly tends to diminish that Awe and Reverence, which all good Men should have for
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the Laws and Government of their Countrey. And to speak of a conditioned, limited Loyalty, and I know not what vague and undetermined Contracts, is a most effectual Means to loosen the Bands of Civil Society ; than which nothing can be of more mischievous Consequence to Mankind. But after all, if there be any Man , who either cannot or will not see the Absurdity and perniciousness of those Notions, he wou'd , I doubt not, be convinced with a Witness, in case they should once become current, and every private Man take it in his Head to believe them true, and put them in practice.

XXV. But there still remains an Objection, which hath the Appearance of some Strength against what has been said. Namely, That whereas Civil Polity is a thing entirely of human Institution, it seems contrary to Reason, to make Submission to it part of the Law of Nature, and not rather of the Civil Law. For how can it be imagin'd that Nature shou'd dictate or prescribe a natural Law about a thing, which depends on the Arbitrary Humour of Men, not only as to its Kind or Form, which is very various and mutable, but even as to its Existence ; there being no where to be found a Civil Government set up by Nature. In answer to this, I observe first, that most Moral Precepts do presuppose some voluntary Actions, or Pacts of Men, and are nevertheless esteemed Laws of Nature. Property is assigned, the Signification of Words ascertained, and Matrimony contracted by the Agreement and Consent of Mankind ; and for all that it is not doubted, whether Theft, Falsehood and Adultery be prohibited by the Law of Nature. Loyalty, therefore, tho it should suppose and be the Result of human Institutions, may,

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for all that, be of natural Obligation. I say, Secondly, that, notwithstanding particular Societies are formed by Men, and are not in all Places alike, as Things esteemed natural are wont to be, yet there is implanted in Mankind a natural Tendency or Disposition to a social Life. I call it *natural*, because it is universal, and because it necessarily results from the Differences which distinguish Man from Beast: The peculiar Wants, Appetites, Faculties, and Capacities of Man, being exactly calculated, and framed for such a State, insomuch that without it, it is impossible he should live in a Condition in any Degree suitable to his Nature. And since the Bond and Cement of Society is a Submission to its Laws, it plainly follows, that this Duty hath an equal Right with any other to be thought a Law of Nature. And, surely that Precept which enjoyns Obedience to Civil Laws, cannot it self with any Propriety be accounted a Civil Law; it must therefore either have no Obligation at all on the Conscience, or if it hath, it must be derived from the universal Voice of Nature and Reason.

XXVI. And thus the first Point proposed seems clearly made out. Namely, That Loyalty is a Virtue or Moral Duty; and Disloyalty or Rebellion, in the most strict and proper Sense, a Vice or Crime against the Law of Nature. We are now come to the Second Point, which was to shew, that the Prohibitions of Vice, or negative Precepts of Morality, are to be taken in a most absolute, necessary, and immutable Sense; insomuch that the Attainment of the greatest Good, or Deliverance from the greatest Evil, that can befall any Man or Number of Men in this Life, may not justify the least Violation of them. But in the first

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place, I shall explain the Reason of distinguishing between Positive and Negative Precepts, the latter only being included in this general Proposition. Now the Ground of that Distinction may be resolved into this; namely, that very often, either through the Difficulty or Number of Moral Actions, or their Inconsistence with each other, it is not possible for one Man to perform several of them at the same time; whereas it is plainly consistent and possible, that any Man shou'd, at the same time, abstain from all manner of positive Actions whatsoever. Hence it comes to pass, that Prohibitions or Negative Precepts must by every one, in all Times and Places, be all actually observed: Whereas those which enjoin the Doing of an Action, allow room for Human Prudence and Discretion, in the Execution of them: it for the most part depending on various accidental Circumstances; all which ought to be consider'd, and Care taken that Duties of less Moment do not interfere with, and hinder the fulfilling of those which are more important. And for this Reason, if not the Positive Laws themselves, at least the Exercise of them admits of Suspension, Limitation, and Diversity of Degrees. As to the Indispensibleness of the Negative Precepts of the Law of Nature, I shall in its Proof offer Two Arguments, the First from the Nature of the Thing, and the Second from the Imitation of God in his Government of the World.

XXVII. First then, from the Nature of the Thing, it hath been already shewn, that the great End of Morality can never be carried on, by leaving each particular Person to promote the Publick Good, in such a manner as he shall think most convenient, without prescribing certain determinate,

nate, universal Rules to be the common Measure of Moral Actions ; and, if we allow the Necessity of these, and at the same time think it lawful to transgress them, whenever the Publick Good shall seem to require it, what is this, but in Words indeed to enjoin the Observation of Moral Rules, but in effect to leave every one to be guided by his own Judgment; than which nothing can be imagined more pernicious and destructive to Mankind, as hath been already proved. Secondly, This same Point may be collected from the Example set us by the Author of Nature, who, as we have above observed, acts according to certain fixed Laws, which he will not transgress upon the Account of Accidental Evils arising from them. Suppose a Prince, on whose Life the Welfare of a Kingdom depends, to fall down a Precipice, we have no Reason to think, that the Universal Law of Gravitation wou'd be suspended in that Case. The like may be said of all other Laws of Nature, which we do not find to admit of Exceptions on particular Accounts.

XXVIII. And, as without such a Steadiness in Nature, we shou'd soon, instead of this beautiful Frame, see nothing but a disorderly, and confused Chaos: So if once it become current, that the Moral Actions of Men are not to be guided by certain definite inviolable Rules, there will be no longer found that Beauty, Order, and Agreement, in the System of Rational Beings, or Moral World, which will then be all cover'd over with Darkness and Violence. It is true, he who stands close to a Palace, can hardly make a right Judgment of the Architecture and Symmetry of its several Parts, the nearer ever appearing disproportionably great. And if we have a mind to take a fair Prospect of

the Order and general Well-being, which the inflexible Laws of Nature and Morality derive on the World, we must, if I may so say, go out of it, and imagine our selves to be distant Spectators of all that is transacted and contained in it; otherwise we are sure to be deceived, by the too near View of the little present Interests of our Selves, our Friends, or our Country. The right Understanding of what hath been said, will, I think, afford a clear Solution to the following Difficulties.

XXIX. First, it may perhaps seem to some, that in Consequence of the foregoing Doctrine, Men will be left to their own private Judgments as much as ever. For, First, the very being of the Laws of Nature; Secondly, the *Criterion* whereby to know them; and, Thirdly, the Agreement of any particular Precept with that *Criterion*, are all to be discovered by Reason and Argumentation, in which every Man doth necessarily judge for himself; hence upon that Supposition, there is Place for as great Confusion, Unsteadiness, and Contrariety of Opinions and Actions, as upon any other. I answer, that however Men may differ, as to what were most proper and beneficial to the Publick to be done or omitted on particular Occasions, when they have for the most part narrow and interested Views; yet in general Conclusions, drawn from an equal and enlarged View of Things, it is not possible there should be so great, if any Disagreement at all amongst Candid, Rational Enquirers after Truth.

XXX. Secondly, The most plausible Pretence of all, against the Doctrine we have premised concerning a rigid indispensable Observation of Moral Rules, is that which is founded on the Consideration

sideration of the Publick Weal ; for since the common Good of Mankind is confessedly the End which God requires shou'd be promoted by the free Actions of Men, it may seem to follow , that all good Men ought ever to have this in View , as the great Mark to which all their Endeavours should be directed ; if therefore in any particular Case, a strict keeping to the Moral Rule shall prove manifestly inconsistent with the Publick Good, it may be thought agreeable to the Will of God, that in that Case the Rule does not restrain an honest disinterested Person, from acting for that End to which the Rule it self was Ordained. For it is an Axiom, that *the End is more Excellent than the Means*, which deriving their Goodness from the End, may not come in Competition with it.

XXXI. In Answer to this, let it be observ'd, that nothing is a *Law* merely because it conduceth to the Publick Good , but because it is decreed by the Will of God, which alone can give the Sanction of a *Law of Nature* to any Precept ; neither is any thing, how expedient or plausible soever, to be esteemed lawful on any other Account, than its being coincident with, or not repugnant to the Laws promulgated by the Voice of Nature and Reason. It must indeed be allowed , that the rational Deduction of those Laws is founded in the intrinsic Tendency they have to promote the Well-being of Mankind, on Condition they are universally and constantly observed. But tho' it afterwards comes to pass, that they accidentally fail of that End, or even promote the contrary, they are nevertheless binding, as hath been already proved. In short, that whole Difficulty may be resolved by the following Distinction. In framing the general Laws of Nature, it is granted, we must be

be entirely guided by the Publick Good of Mankind, but not in the ordinary Moral Actions of our Lives. Such a Rule, if universally observ'd, hath from the Nature of Things, a necessary Fitness to promote the general Well-being of Mankind; therefore it is a Law of Nature: This is good Reasoning. But if we shou'd say such an Action doth in this Instance produce much Good, and no Harm to Mankind; therefore it is lawful: This were wrong. The Rule is framed with respect to the Good of Mankind, but our Practice must be always shaped immediately by the Rule. They who think the Publick Good of a Nation to be the sole Measure of the Obedience due to the Civil Power, seem not to have considered this Distinction.

XXXII. If it be said that some Negative Precepts, *e. g.* *Thou shalt not kill*, do admit of Limitation, since otherwise it were unlawful for the Magistrate, for a Soldier in a Battel, or a Man in his own Defence to kill another: I answer, when a Duty is expressed in too general Terms, as in this Instance, in Order to a distinct Declaration of it, either those Terms may be changed for others of a more limited Sense, as *Kill* for *Murder*, or else from the general Proposition remaining in its full Latitude, Exceptions may be made of those precise Cases, which not agreeing with the Notion of Murder, are not prohibited by the Law of Nature. In the former Case there is a Limitation, but it is only of the Signification of a single Term too general and improper, by substituting another more proper and particular in its Place. In the latter Case there are Exceptions, but then they are not from the Law of Nature, but from a more general Proposition, which besides that Law, includes somewhat

what more, which must be taken away in order to leave the Law by it self clear and determinate. From neither of which Concessions will it follow, that any Negative Law of Nature is limited to those Cases only where its particular Application promotes the Publick Good, or admits all other Cases to be excepted from it, wherein its being actually observed produceth Harm to the Publick. But of this I shall have Occasion to say more in the Sequel. I have now done with the first Head, which was to shew, that there is an Absolute, Unlimited Passive Obedience due to the Supreme Power, where-ever placed in any Nation; and come to enquire into the Grounds and Reasons of the contrary Opinion; which was the Second Thing proposed.

XXXIII. One great Principle, which the Pleaders for Resistance make the Ground-Work of their Doctrine, is, that the Law of Self-Preservation is Prior to all other Engagements, being the very first and fundamental Law of Nature. Hence, say they, Subjects are obliged by Nature, and it is their Duty, to resist the cruel Attempts of Tyrants, however authorized by unjust and Bloody Laws, which are nothing else but the Decrees of Men, and consequently must give way to those of God, or Nature. But, perhaps, if we narrowly examine this Notion, it will not be found so just and clear as some Men may imagine, or, indeed, as at first Sight it seems to be. For we ought to distinguish between a Two-fold Signification of the Terms *Law of Nature*; which Words do either denote a Rule or Precept for the Direction of the voluntary Actions of reasonable Agents, and in that Sense they imply a Duty; or else they are used to signify any general Rule, which we observe to obtain in
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the Works of Nature, independent of the Wills of Men ; in which Sense no Duty is implied. And in this last Acceptation, I grant it is a general Law of Nature, that in every Animal there be implanted a Desire of Self-Preservation, which, tho' it is the earliest, the deepest, and most lasting of all, whether Natural or Acquired Appetites, yet cannot with any Propriety be termed a Moral Duty. But if in the former Sense of the Words, they mean that Self-Preservation is the first and most fundamental Law of Nature, which therefore must take place of all other Natural or Moral Duties: I think that Assertion to be manifestly false, for this plain Reason, because it wou'd thence follow, a Man may lawfully commit any Sin whatsoever to preserve his Life, than which nothing can be more absurd.

XXXIV. It cannot indeed be denied, that the Law of Nature restrains us from doing those Things which may injure the Life of any Man, and consequently our own. But, notwithstanding all that is said of the Obligativeness and Priority of the Law of Self-Preservation, yet, for ought I can see, there is no particular Law, which obliges any Man to prefer his own Temporal Good, not even Life it self, to that of another Man, much less to the Observation of any one Moral Duty. This is what we are too ready to perform of our own Accord ; and there is more Need of a Law to curb and restrain, than there is of one to excite and inflame our Self-Love.

XXXV. But, Secondly, tho' we shou'd grant the Duty of Self-Preservation to be the first and most necessary of all the Positive or Affirmative Laws of Nature ; yet, forasmuch as it is a Maxim
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tho' legal, Attempt on his Life, he does him no Wrong, since Wrong it is not, to prevent another from seizing what he hath no Right to; whence it shou'd seem to follow, that agreeably to Reason, the Prince or Supreme Power wheresoever placed may be resisted. Having thus endeavoured to state their Argument in its clearest Light, I make this Answer. First, it is granted, no Civil Power hath an unlimited Right to dispose of the Life of any Man. Secondly, in case one Man resist another invading that which he hath no Right to, it is granted he doth him no Wrong. But in the Third Place, I deny that it doth thence follow, the Supreme Power may consonantly to Reason be resisted, because that altho' such Resistance wronged not the Prince or Supreme Power wheresoever placed, yet it were injurious to the Author of Nature, and a Violation of his Law, which Reason obligeth us to Transgress upon no Account whatsoever, as hath been demonstrated.

XXXVIII. A Fourth Mistake or Prejudice which influenceth the Impugners of Non-Resistance, arises from the natural Dread of Slavery, Chains, and Fetters which inspires them with an Aversion for any thing, which even metaphorically comes under those Denominations. Hence they cry out against us that we wou'd deprive them of their natural Freedom, that we are making Chains for Mankind, that we are for enslaving them, and the like. But how harsh soever the Sentence may appear, yet it is most true, that our Appetites, even the most natural, as of Ease, Plenty, or Life it self, must be chain'd and fetter'd by the Laws of Nature and Reason. This Slavery, if they will call it so, or Subjection of our Passions to the immutable Decrees of Reason, though it may be
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Galling to the sensual Part or the Beast, yet sure I am, it addeth much to the Dignity of that which is peculiarly Human in our Composition. This leads me to the Fifth fundamental Error :

XXXIX. Namely, the mistaking the Object of Passive Obedience. We shou'd consider, that when a Subject endures the Insolence and Oppression of one or more Magistrates, armed with the Supreme Civil Power, the Object of his Submission is, in strict Truth, nothing else but right Reason, which is the Voice of the Author of Nature. Think not we are so senseless, as to imagine Tyrants cast in a better Mould than other Men : No, they are the worst and vilest of Men, and for their own Sakes, have not the least Right to our Obedience. But the Laws of God and Nature must be obey'd, and our Obedience to them is never more acceptable and sincere, than when it exposeth us to Temporal Calamities.

XL. A Sixth false Ground of Persuasion to those we argue against, is their not distinguishing between the Natures of Positive and Negative Duties. For, say they, since our active Obedience to the Supreme Civil Power is acknowledged to be limited, why may not our Duty of Non-Resistance be thought so too ? The Answer is plain ; because Positive and Negative Moral Precepts are not of the same Nature, the former admitting such Limitations and Exceptions as the latter are on no Account liable to, as hath been already proved. It is very possible that a Man in obeying the Commands of his lawful Governors, might transgress some Law of God contrary to them ; which it is not possible for him to do, meerly by a patient Suffering and Non-Resistance for Conscience sake. And this

furnishes such a Satisfactory and obvious Solution of the forementioned Difficulty, that I am not a little surprized to see it insisted on, by Men, otherwise, of good Sense and Reason. And so much for the Grounds and Reasons of the Adversaries of Non-Resistance. I now proceed to the third and last Thing proposed, Namely, the Consideration of the Objections drawn from the pretended Consequences of Non-Resistance.

XLI. First then it will be objected, that in Consequence of that Notion, we must believe that God hath, in several Instances, laid the innocent Part of Mankind under an unavoidable Necessity of enduring the greatest Sufferings and Hardships without any Remedy; which is plainly inconsistent with the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, and therefore the Principle from whence that Consequence flows, ought not to be admitted as a Law of God or Nature. In Answer to which I observe, we must carefully distinguish between the necessary and accidental Consequences of a Moral Law. The former Kind are those which the Law is in its own Nature calculated to produce, and which have an inseparable Connexion with the Observation of it; and indeed if these are bad, we may justly conclude the Law to be so too, and consequently not from God. But the accidental Consequences of a Law, have no intrinsic natural Connexion with, nor do they strictly speaking flow from its Observation, but are the genuine Result of something foreign and circumstantial, which happens to be joyned with it. And these accidental Consequences of a very good Law, may nevertheless be very bad; which Badness of theirs is to be charged on their own proper and necessary Cause, and not on the Law, which hath no Essential Tenden-

cy to produce them. Now though it must be granted, that a Lawgiver infinitely wise and good will constitute such Laws for the Regulation of human Actions, as have in their own Nature a necessary inherent Aptness to promote the common Good of all Mankind, and that in the greatest Degree that the present Circumstances and Capacities of human Nature will admit ; yet we deny that the Wisdom and Goodness of the Lawgiver are concerned, or may be called in Question, on Account of the particular Evils which arise, necessarily and properly, from the *Transgression* of some one or more good Laws, and but accidentally from the *Observation* of others. But it is plain that the several Calamities and Devastations, which oppressive Governments bring on the World, are not the genuine necessary Effects of the Law, that enjoineth a Passive Subjection to the Supreme Power, neither are they included in the primary Intention thereof, but spring from Avarice, Ambition, Cruelty, Revenge, and the like inordinate Affections and Vices raging in the Breasts of Governors. They may not therefore argue a defect of Wisdom or Goodness in God's Law, but of Righteousness in Men.

XLII. Such is the present State of Things, so irregular are the Wills, and so unrestrained the Passions of Men, that we every Day see manifest Breaches and Violations of the Laws of Nature, which being always committed in Favour of the Wicked, must surely be sometimes attended with heavy Disadvantages and Miseries, on the Part of those who by a firm Adhesion to his Laws endeavour to approve themselves in the Eyes of their Creator. There are in short, no Rules of Morality, not excepting the best, but what may subject
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good Men to great Sufferings and Hardships, which necessarily follows from the Wickedness of those they have to deal with, and but accidentally from those good Rules. And as on the one Hand it were inconsistent with the Wisdom of God, by suffering a retaliation of Fraud, Perjury, or the like on the Head of Offenders, to punish one Transgression by another: So on the other Hand, it were inconsistent with his Justice, to leave the Good and Innocent a hopeless Sacrifice to the Wicked. God therefore hath appointed a Day of Retribution in another Life, and in this we have his Grace and a good Conscience for our Support. We shou'd not therefore repine at the Divine Laws, or shew a frowardness or impatience of those transient Sufferings they accidentally expose us to, which however grating to Flesh and Blood, will yet seem of small moment, if we compare the littleness and fleetingness of this present World with the Glory and Eternity of the next.

XLIII. From what hath been said I think it is plain, that the premised Doctrine of Non-Resistance were safe, tho' the Evils incurred thereby shou'd be allowed never so great. But perhaps upon a strict examination, they will be found much less than by many they are thought to be. The mischievous effects which are charged on that Doctrine may be reduced to these two Points. First, that it is an encouragement for all Governors to become Tyrants, by the prospect it gives them of Impunity or Non-Resistance. Secondly, that it renders the Oppression and Cruelty of those who are Tyrants, more insupportable and violent, by cutting off all Opposition, and consequently all means of Redress. I shall consider each of these distinctly. As to the first Point, either you'll sup-
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pose the Governors to be good or ill Men. If they are Good, there is no fear of their becoming Tyrants. And if they are ill Men, that is, such as postpone the Observation of God's Laws to the satisfying of their own Lusts, then it can be no Security to them, that others will rigidly observe those Moral Precepts, which they find themselves so prone to Transgress.

XLIV. It is indeed a Breach of the Law of Nature for a Subject, tho' under the greatest and most unjust Sufferings, to lift up his Hand against the Supreme Power. But it is a more heinous and inexcusable Violation of it, for the Persons invested with the Supreme Power, to use that Power to the Ruin and Destruction of the People committed to their Charge. What encouragement therefore can any Man have, to think that others will not be push'd on by the strong implanted Appetite of Self-Preservation, to commit a Crime, when he himself commits a more brutish and unnatural Crime, perhaps without any provocation at all? Or is it to be imagined that they who daily break God's Laws, for the sake of some little Profit or transient Pleasure, will not be tempted by the love of Property, Liberty, or Life it self, to Transgress that single Precept which forbids Resistance to the Supreme Power?

XLV. But it will be demanded, to what purpose then is this Duty of Non-Resistance Preached and Proved, and Recommended to our Practice, if in all likelihood, when things come to an extremity, Men will never observe it? I Answer, to the very same purpose that any other Duty is Preached. For what Duty is there which many, too many, upon some consideration or other may
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not be prevail'd on to Transgress? Moralists and Divines do not Preach the Duties of Nature and Religion, with the View of Gaining Mankind to a perfect Observation of them; that they know is not to be done. But, however, our Pains are Answered, if we can make Men less Sinners than otherwise they wou'd be; if by opposing the force of Duty to that of present Interest and Passion, we can get the better of some Temptations, and Balance others, while the greatest still remain Invincible.

XLVI. But granting those who are invested with the Supreme Power to have all imaginable Security, that no cruel and barbarous Treatment whatever cou'd provoke their Subjects to Rebellion: Yet I believe it may be justly questioned, whether such Security would tempt them to more or greater Acts of Cruelty, than Jealousie, Distrust, Suspicion and Revenge may do in a State less Secure. And so far in consideration of the first Point, Namely, that the Doctrine of Non-Resistance is an encouragement for Governors to become Tyrants.

XLVII. The second Mischievous Effect it was Charged with, is, that it renders the Oppression and Cruelty of those who are Tyrants more insupportable and violent, by cutting off all Opposition, and consequently all means of Redress. But, if things are rightly consider'd, it will appear, that Redressing the Evils of Government by Force, is at best, a very hazardous Attempt, and what often puts the Publick in a worse State than it was before. For either you suppose the Power of the Rebels to be but small, and easily Crushed, and then this is apt to inspire the Governors with Confidence

fidence and Cruelty. Or, in case you suppose it
 more considerable, so as to be a Match for the Su-
 preme Power supported by the Publick Treasure,
 Forts and Armies, and that the whole Nation is
 engaged in a Civil War ; the certain effects of this
 are Rapine, Bloodshed, Misery, and Confusion to
 all Orders and Parties of Men, greater and more
 insupportable by far, than are known under any
 the most absolute and severe Tyranny upon Earth.
 And it may be that after much mutual Slaughter,
 the Rebellious Party will prevail. And if they do
 prevail to Destroy the Government in Being, it
 may be they will Substitute a better in its Place, or
 change it into better Hands. And may not this
 come to pass without the expence, and toil, and
 blood of War ? Is not the Heart of a Prince in
 the Hand of God ? May he not therefore give him
 a right Sense of his Duty, or may he not call him
 out of the World by Sicknefs, Accident, or the
 Hand of some desperate Ruffian, and send a better
 in his Stead. When I speak as of a Monarchy, I
 would be understood to mean all sorts of Govern-
 ment, wheresoever the Supreme Power is Lodged.
 Upon the whole, I think we may close with the
 Heathen Philosopher, who thought it the part of
 a Wise Man, never to attempt the Change of Go-
 vernment by Force, when it cou'd not be mended
 without the Slaughter and Banishment of his
 Countrymen : But to Sit still, and Pray for bet-
 ter Times *. For this way may do, and the other
 may not do ; there is uncertainty in both Courses.
 The difference is, that in the way of Rebellion,
 we are sure to increase the Publick Calamities, for
 a time at least, tho' we are not sure of lessening
 them for the future.

* Plato in *Epist.* 7.

XLVIII. But tho' it should be acknowledged, that in the main, Submission and Patience ought to be recommended ; yet, Men will be still apt to demand , whether extraordinary Cases may not require extraordinary Measures ; and therefore in case the Oppression be insupportable, and the Prospect of Deliverance sure, whether Rebellion may not be allowed of? I Answer, By no means. Perjury, or Breach of Faith, may, in some possible Cases, bring great Advantage to a Nation, by freeing it from Conditions inconsistent with its Liberty and Publick Welfare. So likewise, may Adultery, by procuring a Domestick Heir, prevent a Kingdom's falling into the Hands of a Foreign Power, which wou'd in all probability prove its Ruin. Yet will any Man say, the extraordinary Nature of those Cases can take away the Guilt of Perjury and Adultery? This is what I will not suppose. But it hath been shewn, that Rebellion is as truly a Crime against Nature and Reason as either of the foregoing, it may not therefore be Justified upon any Account whatever, any more than they.

XLIX. What! Must we then Submit our Necks to the Sword? And is there no Help, no Refuge against extream Tyranny established by Law? In Answer to this, I say in the first place, it is not to be feared that Men in their Wits shou'd seek the Destruction of their People, by such cruel and unnatural Decrees as some are forward to suppose. I say, Secondly, that in case they shou'd, yet most certainly the Subordinate Magistrates may not, nay, they ought not, in Obedience to those Decrees to act any thing contrary to the express Laws of God. And perhaps all things considered, it will

will be thought, that representing this Limitation of their active Obedience by the Laws of God or Nature, as a Duty to the Ministers of the Supreme Power, may prove in those extravagant supposed Cases no less effectual for the Peace and Safety of a Nation, than Preaching up the Power of Resistance to the People.

L. Further, It will probably be Objected as an Absurdity in the Doctrine of Passive Obedience, that it enjoyneth Subjects a blind implicit Submission to the Decrees of other Men ; which is unbecoming the Dignity and Freedom of reasonable Agents ; who indeed ought to pay Obedience to their Superiors, but it shou'd be a rational Obedience, such as arises from a knowledge of the Equity of their Laws, and the Tendency they have to promote the Public Good. To which I Answer, That it is not likely a Government shou'd suffer much for want of having its Laws inspected and amended, by those who are not legally intitled to a share in the management of Affairs of that Nature. And it must be confessed, the Bulk of Mankind are by their Circumstances and Occupations, so far unqualified to judge of such Matters, that they must necessarily pay an implicit deference to some or other, and to whom so properly as to those invested with the Supreme Power ?

LI. There is another Objection against absolute Submission, which I shou'd not have mentioned, but that I find it insisted on by Men of so great Note, as *Grotius* and *Pufendorf**, who think our Non-Resistance shou'd be measured by the in-

* *Grotius de jure Belli & Pacis*, l. 1. c. 4. s. 7. & *Pufendorf de jure natura & gentium*, l. 7. c. 8. s. 7.

tion of those who first framed the Society. Now, say they, if we suppose the question put to them, Whether they meant to lay every Subject under a Necessity of chusing Death, rather than in any Case to Resist the Cruelty of his Superiors, it cannot be imagined, they wou'd Answer in the Affirmative. For this were to put themselves in a worse Condition, than that which they endeavoured to avoid by entring into Society. For altho' they were obnoxious to the Injuries of many, they had nevertheless the Power of Resisting them. But now they are bound, without any Opposition at all, to endure the greatest Injuries from those whom they have Armed with their own Strength. Which is by so much worse than the former State, as the undergoing an Execution is worse than the hazard of a Battle. But (passing by all other Exceptions which this Method of arguing may be liable to) it is evident, that a Man had better be exposed to the absolute irresistible Decrees, even of one single Person, whose own and Posterities true Interest it is to preserve him in Peace and Plenty, and Protect him from the Injuries of all Mankind beside, than remain an open Prey to the Rage and Avarice of every Wicked Man upon Earth, who either exceeds him in Strength, or takes him at an Advantage. The Truth of this is confirmed, as well by the constant Experience of the far greater Part of the World, as by what we have already observ'd concerning Anarchy, and the Inconsistence of such a State, with that manner of Life which Human Nature requires. Hence it is plain, the Objection last mentioned is Built on a false Supposition; *Viz.* That Men, by quitting the Natural State of Anarchy for that of absolute Non-Resisting Obedience to Government, wou'd put themselves in a worse Condition than they were in before.

LII. The last Objection I shall take Notice of is, that in pursuance of the premised Doctrine, where no Exceptions, no Limitations are to be allowed of, it shou'd seem to follow, Men were bound to submit without making any Opposition to Usurpers, or even Madmen possessed of the Supreme Authority. Which is a Notion so absurd and repugnant to common Sense, that the Foundation on which it is Built, may justly be called in Question. Now, in order to clear this Point, I observe the Limitation of Moral Duties may be understood in a Twofold Sense, either first as a Distinction applied to the Terms of a Proposition, whereby that which was expressed before too generally is limited to a particular Acceptation; and this, in truth, is not so properly limiting the Duty as defining it. Or, Secondly, it may be understood as a Suspending the Observation of a Duty for avoiding some extraordinary Inconvenience, and thereby confining it to certain Occasions. And in this last Sense only, We have shewn Negative Duties not to admit of Limitation. Namely, that by Vertue of the Duty of *Non-Resistance*, We are not obliged to Submit the Disposal of our Lives and Fortunes to the Discretion either of Madmen, or of all those who by Craft or Violence invade the Supreme Power. Because the Object of the Submission enjoyned Subjects by the Law of Nature is, from the Reason of the thing, Manifestly limited so as to exclude both the one and the other. Which I shall not go about to prove, because I believe no Body has denied it. Nor doth the Annexing such Limits to the Object of our Obedience, at all limit the Duty itself, in the Sense we except against.

LIII. In

LIII. In the Various Changes and Fluctuations of Government, it is impossible to prevent that Controversies shou'd sometimes arise concerning the Seat of the Supreme Power. And in such Cases Subjects cannot be Denied the Liberty of Judging for Themselves, or of taking part with some, and opposing others, according to the best of their Judgments ; all which is Consistent with an exact Observation of their Duty, so long as, when the Constitution is clear in the Point, and the Object of their Submission undoubted, no Pretext of Interest, Friends, or the Publick Good, can make them depart from it. In short, it is acknowledged, that the Precept enjoyning Non-Resistance is Limited to particular Objects, but not to particular Occasions. And in this it is like all other Moral Negative Duties, which consider'd as general Propositions, do admit of Limitations and Restrictions, in order to a distinct Definition of the Duty ; but what is once known to be a Duty of that sort, can never become otherwise by any good or ill Effect, Circumstance, or Event whatsoever. And in Truth if it were not so, if there were no General Inflexible Rules, but all Negative as well as Positive Duties might be Dispensed with, and Warpt to Serve particular Interests and Occasions, there were an end of all Morality.

LIV. It is therefore Evident, that as the Observation of any other Negative Moral Law, is not to be limited to those Instances only, where it may produce good Effects ; so neither is the Observation of Non-Resistance limited in such sort, as that any Man may Lawfully Transgress it, whensoever in his Judgment, the Publick Good of his Particular Country shall require it. And it is with Regard

gard to this Limitation by the Effects, that I speak of Non-Resistance, as an absolute, unconditioned, unlimited Duty. Which must inevitably be granted, unless one of these three Things can be prov'd: Either, First, that *Non-Resistance* is no Moral Duty. Or, Secondly, that other Negative Moral Duties are limited by the Effects. Or, Lastly, that there is something peculiar in the Nature of *Non-Resistance*, which necessarily subjects it to such a Limitation, as no other Negative Moral Duty can admit. The contrary to each of which Points, if I mistake not, hath been clearly made out.

LV. I have now briefly gone through the Objections drawn from the Consequences of Non-Resistance, which was the last General Head I proposed to Treat of. In handling this and the other Points, I have endeavour'd to be as full and clear, as the usual length of these Discourses would permit, and throughout to consider the Argument with the same Indifference, as I shou'd any other part of General Knowledge, being verily perswaded that Men, as Christians, are obliged to the Practice of no one Moral Duty, which may not abide the severest Test of Reason.

F I N I S.

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...Which must necessarily be ...
...one of these three Things can be ...
...With this ... Moral Duty ...
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IV. I have now briefly gone through the Ob-
jections drawn from the Consequences of Non-
observance, which was the last General Head I
proposed to Treat of. In handling this and the
last I have endeavoured to be as full and
clear, as the small length of this Dissertation would
allow, and therefore to condense the Argument
in the same manner, as I should any other
part of General Kant's ... being very per-
fectly clear, as ... are obliged to the
... of no one Moral Duty, which may not
... the lowest ... of Reason.